

97-84169-9

Robinson, Edward Van  
Dyke

The reorganization of the  
grades and the high...

[S.I.]

[1912?]

97-84169-9

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 Type: a ELvl: K Srce: d Audn: Ctrl: Lang: eng  
 BLvl: m Form: a Conf: 0 Biog: MRec: Ctry: xx  
 Cont: GPub: Fict: 0 Indx: 0  
 Desc: a Ills: Fest: 0 DtSt: s Dates: 1912, ++  
 1 040 PR1 v c PR1 ++  
 2 007 h v b d v d a v e f v f a--- v g b v h a v i c v j p ++  
 3 007 h v b d v d a v e f v f a--- v g b v h a v i a v j p ++  
 4 007 h v b d v d a v e f v f a--- v g b v h a v i b v j p ++  
 5 049 PR1A ++  
 6 100 1 Robinson, Edward Van Dyke. ++  
 7 245 13 The reorganization of the grades and the high school v h  
 [microform] / v c Edward Van Dyke Robinson. ++  
 8 260 [S.l. : v b s.n., v c 1912?] ++  
 9 300 p. 665-688 ; v c 24 cm. ++  
 10 500 Cover title. ++  
 11 500 "Reprinted for private circulation from The school review, vol.  
 XX, no 10, December 1912." ++

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## TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm

REDUCTION RATIO: 12:1

IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 8/27/97

INITIALS: PB

TRACKING #: 26289

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*From the Author*

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE GRADES  
AND THE HIGH SCHOOL

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Box 202

EDWARD VAN DYKE ROBINSON

Reprinted for private circulation from  
THE SCHOOL REVIEW, Vol. XX, No. 10, December 1912

## THE REORGANIZATION OF THE GRADES AND THE HIGH SCHOOL

EDWARD VAN DYKE ROBINSON  
The University of Minnesota

At no previous period in the world's history have changes in the conditions of life been so rapid as they are today. Caesar and Napoleon were separated by some eighteen centuries, yet they saw about them essentially the same conditions of labor, of travel, and of life. It is now less than a century since the death of Napoleon, yet if he could return today, he would find no essential aspect of life, as he knew it, unchanged. Moreover, in America at least, these changes have for the most part occurred since the Civil War. That in consequence American education today is ill adapted to the changed conditions of life, few who are familiar with modern industry, as well as with education, will care to deny.

The common schools of today can be traced back to the *writing and reckoning* schools established in Massachusetts in 1680. These corresponded approximately to grades 4, 5, and 6. The lower grades, 1, 2, and 3, were not generally added until about 1820. Grades 7 and 8, or work corresponding thereto, were added still later, while the high school was at first merely a further extension of the common schools along the same lines as grades 7 and 8. Gradually, however, the high schools became separate in organization and administration from the grades below them. This differentiation occurred partly as a result of the growth of towns into cities, which rendered it impossible to house all the pupils in one central building. It was also due in part to the increasing demand on the part of the public that these schools take over the business of preparing students for college, which had hitherto been a monopoly of the private academies. Thus it has come about that the American public-school system consists of an elementary course of eight or nine years, followed by a secondary course of three or four years, radically different in character,

organization, and administration. Strictly speaking, it is not a system at all, but a historical accident.

In the second place, not only was the American public-school system never deliberately planned by anyone, but I venture to doubt whether, if it were not already here, any sane man would ever plan it as it now exists. A few of the most obvious objections to it may be thus briefly summarized.

Neither the common school nor the high school has, under existing conditions, any separate task or any definite purpose.

The proper aim of the common school is to impart the school arts (reading, writing, and arithmetic); but continued drill on these subjects throughout eight years, with emphasis on form in place of content, is deadening in its monotony. Moreover, if the unanimous testimony of the business world can be accepted, such drill does not produce a marked degree of proficiency in any of the arts. Far better results are obtained in countries such as Germany where attention is earlier shifted from the form to the content. In so far, however, as such a shift is made in the common school, it ceases to have a separate task or a definite purpose.

The proper aim of the high school, on the other hand, is to map the general divisions of the field of human knowledge, and show the methods of approach to each, to the end that students may find their way around alone, and likewise find themselves—that is, choose, as wisely as may be, their life-work. As matters stand, the high school is forced to share this task with the grades below, which have no organization whatever for such a purpose; and also with the college above, where essentially high-school work is continued during the first year or two of the course. These facts fully justify Dr. Dewey's contention that "the high school begins at no definite point and ends at none."

In order to fill up the eight-year elementary course, when first established, the common school took over from the district school its collection of arithmetical and grammatical puzzles, intended originally for young men and women, but wholly unsuited to children; and all efforts to dislodge this mass of absurdities from the common schools have failed, even though the curriculum is now seriously overloaded. As a result, the schools continually work against, in place of with, nature.

At the time when pupils' memory is active and their reason undeveloped, they are given complicated arithmetical puzzles to solve, or required to delve in the mysteries of technical English grammar, which (as distinguished from practical language work) is a highly abstruse subject. Thus it comes to pass that, in the words of the Morrison Report, "much is learned today with great painstaking which, if left until the riper experience of tomorrow, would be learned incidentally and without conscious effort." At a later period, when memory is less active and reason has begun to develop, the schools again go counter to nature by putting pupils on subjects calling chiefly for memory, such as the elements of foreign languages. This practice is, moreover, so much a part of the system that it can be eliminated only by a fundamental reorganization.

Differentiation of courses is too long delayed.

The age of twelve usually marks the beginning of adolescence, when a profound change, both physical and psychical, occurs. On the psychic side this change is marked by new feelings, new interests, and new tastes—in a word, by the development of individuality. To attempt longer to crowd all children through one and the same course cannot but prove disastrous.

We have heard much of late concerning "retardation" and "elimination" in the schools; and many ingenious reasons have been assigned for these phenomena. In point of fact, the matter is very simple. We have the testimony of Mr. Ayres, in his epoch-making study of *Laggards in Our Schools*, that elimination from school is most noticeable after the pupils reach the age of twelve, when they are required to take up a "continuation of a wearisomely monotonous curriculum." It cannot be otherwise. A uniform curriculum must aim at the "average pupil," who is a myth, and cannot be adapted to the varying tastes and capacities of the actual pupils. It therefore of necessity destroys interest, and fails utterly to meet the social and economic needs of the community. Such a curriculum in fact, while designed chiefly to prepare for high school, is not even well adapted for that purpose; and it is still less suited to the great majority who never enter high school.

In view of these facts, it is clear that no man and no body of

men, however wise, can construct a course which will be the best for all pupils through eight years. Differentiation of courses is indispensable, and the logical and psychological moment for such differentiation is at the age of twelve—that is, the beginning of the seventh grade.

The common-school curriculum is hopelessly congested, especially in grades 7 and 8.

Besides formal drill in the school arts, and the mass of puzzles which it inherited from the district school, new subjects are constantly being introduced, largely in response to popular demands. Each class of zealots in the community feels that the safety of the country depends upon having the subject in which they are interested taught in the common schools. They organize, and agitate, and petition, until the subject is introduced; then perchance, having done their duty, they forget all about it. The congestion, however, remains; the teacher, the principal, the superintendent, and the unfortunate pupils cannot forget about it. Thus we have algebra, and constructional geometry, and drawing, and music, and nature-study, and temperance physiology, and patriotism, and shopwork, and sewing, and cooking, and agriculture, all added to an already overcrowded curriculum. Is it a wonder that teachers have nervous prostration, or that children are unable to master anything because of the multiplicity of things they are called upon to study?

Many people, seeing this condition of the curriculum, exclaim against the "fads and frills," and demand a return to the "three R's"; but the days of the "three R's" have passed away, never to return. Conditions of life have become too complex, and the demands upon the citizen too great, for such a simple and rudimentary education. It does not follow, however, because a subject is worthy of a place in the course, that all pupils should be compelled to study it, or that all should study it to the same extent. In other words, the remedy for congestion of the curriculum is not exclusion of subjects, but differentiation of courses, so that pupils may in a measure follow the bent of their tastes and capacities.

If a uniform course through eight years is bad, promotion by grades is worse, especially after the age of twelve.

To force all pupils not only to take the same course for eight years, but to repeat subjects which they have passed, merely because they have failed in others in the same grade, is to generate indifference, if not active hatred, for school. In view of these two practices, no one need wonder why so many pupils are "retarded" or "eliminated"; the only mystery is, that so many survive and go through the schools.

The break between the grades and the high school is too sudden and complete.

This is the case because the pupil usually passes at once from the patriarchal (or matriarchal) régime of one room, one teacher, a fixed body of classmates, and a familiar round of studies to the régime of various rooms and teachers, a shifting body of students, and a series of wholly new subjects. The school mortality in such circumstances is unavoidably heavy. On the other hand, many who now fail and leave school would succeed if only the change were more gradual. Here again the remedy is differentiation of courses and promotion by subjects (which of course involves departmental work) in the seventh and eighth grades, before the old and familiar studies are wholly discontinued.

The break between the grades and high school, moreover, occurs at the worst possible point in the course.

Under the present plan, this break happens in the very midst of adolescence, when the pupil is usually possessed by the greatest variety of vagaries and hallucinations. To turn him adrift at such a time, especially with the additional hallucination that in finishing the eighth grade he has actually completed something, is to insure the maximum number of irreparable mistakes. On the other hand, if the pupil could be held in the familiar environment and under the same influences for a year longer, such mistakes would be greatly reduced. It is the first year of high school which is fatal; relatively few who pass the first year successfully go to pieces afterward.

Again, the break at the end of the eighth grade does not, in progressive states such as Minnesota, correspond to the legal age for leaving school.

As a result, vast numbers either leave school a year or two

before the legal age, or, if they enter high school under compulsion, merely loaf until they are of legal age. In such cases, they are a detriment to the school; and they are apt to acquire habits of idleness which later prove a detriment to themselves. In fact, there is no doubt that many a boy has been ruined by a year in high school, while waiting for time to pass. Even supposing a student who is staying only one year in high school does apply himself, what can he accomplish in that time which is worth while? On the other hand, he would profit greatly if he could have, in place of fragments of two practically unrelated courses (in the grades and the high school), a unified three-year course, beginning in grade 7 and adjusted to his special needs and capacity. Such a unified course cannot be given partly in the grades and partly in the high school, in view of the fundamental difference in spirit, organization, and personnel which obtains in these schools. A redivision of grades and high school is therefore imperative if such a course is to be established.

The break between the eighth and ninth grades is especially unfortunate in small communities which cannot properly maintain the full high-school course. In such cases the community sometimes spends money in attempting to maintain a full high-school course which is sorely needed in the grades, with the result that both the grades and the high school are starved, and their efficiency suffers. This is the situation in not a few villages in Minnesota. On the other hand, it frequently happens that such communities, recognizing their inability to maintain a full high-school course, decide to stop with the eighth grade, notwithstanding their population and taxable property would warrant the addition of another year. The effect is, in the aggregate, to cut short the education of large numbers of children.

The problem here suggested is of great importance now, and is certain to increase in gravity with the rise of consolidated rural schools. Indeed, the success of this movement depends in no small measure on the proper articulation of rural schools with high schools. Such schools cannot, as a rule, carry pupils through the high school, yet to stop at the eighth grade is to expose the pupils to all the dangers of the present system, multiplied by reason of

distance, expense in reaching larger schools, and total unfamiliarity with town conditions. Here again the remedy is to differentiate at the beginning of the seventh grade, and offer several unified courses running through the ninth. Students completing such courses will usually be of legal age to stop school; and those who decide to enter high school will be exposed to far less danger.

The present system complicates unnecessarily the problem of discipline. The great problem in the grades is to control the big boys, and the girls whose minds have begun to run on boys. If these could be removed, the benefit would be mutual: first, to the lower grades, which would be relieved of a disturbing element; second, to the older pupils themselves, who could be brought under conditions and methods of discipline more suited to their years.

Somewhat similar conditions obtain in the high school. It is well known that first-year high-school pupils need quite different treatment from the upper grades. In fact, they have more in common with grades 7 and 8 than with the grades above them. This fact emphasizes the desirability of a common course and administrative organization for grades 7, 8, and 9.

The present system results in inefficient teachers and teaching, especially in the grades. This is not a criticism of the grade teachers themselves; many among them are most conscientious and capable. It is, however, a fundamental criticism of the system under which they work. The grade teacher and the grade principal are the only surviving persons in this age of specialization who are officially expected to know everything and to teach everything. The result is that they cannot make adequate preparation for their work before they begin teaching; and still less can they do so after they are once in the treadmill of daily work. On the other hand, with differentiation of courses, promotion by grades, and departmental work, each teacher above the sixth grade could devote herself to one or two allied subjects, with a great gain in efficiency.

By this plan, moreover, each pupil would come into contact with several teachers; and a single inefficient or overnervous teacher could not work the educational ruin of a whole roomful of children, as sometimes happens under the present system.

It is indeed true that departmental work can be carried on without the proposed reorganization. It is, however, something at bottom alien to the present system and dependent everywhere upon the will of the superintendent or principal: under the proposed plan, it would become an essential part of the system.

The present system is economically wasteful.

It is wasteful of teachers: for it is unavoidable, when schools are so placed as to be within walking distance for children of five or six years of age, that the seventh- and eighth-grade classes will vary greatly in size, some being too large and others too small. Yet no matter how small these grades may be, each district insists on having them. Scattering these grades of course runs up the per capita cost and compels economies in other directions, such as teachers' salaries and material equipment. The wastefulness inherent in the present system thus reacts directly upon the efficiency of the schools.

The present system is even more wasteful of material equipment. In the days of the "three R's," when a school consisted of four walls and some benches, this factor did not enter into the problem; but with the introduction of the elements of science, and especially the manual subjects—shopwork, cooking, sewing, and the rest—a large material equipment has become indispensable.

To provide an adequate equipment for these subjects in every public school means a practically prohibitive expense. What is more, the equipment would necessarily lie idle most of the time. This fact has led, in many places, to the establishment of "manual training centers" for grades 7 and 8, at certain centrally located schools. This device is an open confession that the eight-and-four division of the public schools no longer corresponds to the educational needs of the times. Moreover, owing to the inevitable loss of time and the administrative disorganization due to the frequent shifting of pupils from school to school, it is certainly a temporary makeshift. In point of fact, it is no doubt the first step toward the break-up of the eight-and-four plan, and the concentration of grades 7 and 8 at various centrally located schools, where classes can be equalized, workshops, assembly halls, and gymnasiums provided, and teachers employed who are especially

adapted to pupils of that age, and especially prepared to teach certain subjects.

In view of the objections to the present public-school system, of which the foregoing is but a brief and imperfect summary, it is not surprising that for many years most thinking men have felt that the results obtained from the public schools are not at all commensurate with the time, money, and nervous energy spent upon them.

The first striking evidence of this conviction was afforded by the famous report of the Committee of Ten, of which President Eliot of Harvard was chairman. In 1893 this committee reported to the National Association in favor of "enriching" the course of study in grades below the high school, through the introduction of various subjects such as algebra and Latin, which had hitherto been confined to the high schools. This plan was adopted in many schools, but few will claim that the results have been satisfactory. The subjects were introduced without being recast to adapt them to a lower grade, without any change in the organization or administration of those grades so that the pupils might be adapted to new methods of work, and in many cases without adequately trained teachers to handle the new subjects. In these circumstances failure was inevitable. The principal effect of this enrichment plan has been further to overload an already congested curriculum.

In 1899 the Committee of Thirteen, recognizing that the enrichment plan had failed, and likewise the reason for it, reported to the National Education Association in favor of a unified six-year high-school course, beginning with the seventh grade. This recommendation, however, like that of the Committee of Ten, came from men who were for the most part not public-school men, and the plan was regarded generally as designed to further college interests. Some few cities, such as Kansas City and Muskegon, Mich., went so far as to transfer the eighth grade into the high school—establishing thus a seven-year elementary course, and a five-year high-school course. The general testimony is that this change was a decided improvement over former conditions. No city, however,



at that time, adopted the recommendation of the Committee of Thirteen as a whole.

In 1904 an exposition was held in St. Louis, which brought forcibly to the attention of the educators of the United States the fact that this is the only civilized country in the world which demands eight or nine years of school life for the general elementary course. It was seen that the English, French, or German boy is approximately two years ahead of the American boy. It was further noted that England, France, and Japan, which have studied the educational systems of all countries with the utmost care, all have the six-year elementary period, while Germany has in part a four-year elementary period. In these circumstances the movement for the reorganization of our educational system received renewed attention.

At the 1905 meeting of the National Education Association, a committee was appointed to study the question, of which committee Principal Morrison of St. Louis was chairman. This committee and its successors reported in 1907 and subsequent years emphatically in favor of what is called the six-and-six plan; that is, a six-year elementary course followed by a six-year high-school course.

Unlike the report of the Committee of Thirteen, this movement originated with practical school men, the colleges having nothing to do with it. As a result of this movement, together with the growing dissatisfaction of the public with the traditional system of education, there are now some twenty cities in the United States having five- or six-year high-school courses, following six- or seven-year elementary courses.

The six-and-six plan has the merit of definiteness and simplicity. In villages and towns where children of twelve years of age can readily reach a central building, it is also the plan most easily adopted and most certain to prove efficient in operation. In the long run, indeed, these merits may not improbably cause it to be generally adopted, though distance and expense are serious obstacles to its immediate adoption in the larger cities.

There is, however, one serious objection to the plan as usually framed. Many students must necessarily drop out before the end of the high-school course, and the usual six-year plan provides

no suitable stopping-point for such students, but leaves them with a sense of failure and incompleteness. What is perhaps more important, it leaves them, as the present system does, without a well-rounded training for anything in particular. In order to meet their needs, it would be necessary to divide the six-year course into two three-year cycles, one embracing grades 7-8-9, the other including grades 10-11-12; and then to arrange the curriculum so that few subjects would lap over from one cycle to the next, and likewise so that the practical or vocational element would be emphasized in grades 9 and 12. For example, while English and foreign languages would have to overlap, the several sciences could be assigned to one or the other cycle, and high-school mathematics (algebra, etc.) could be reserved exclusively for the upper cycle. Such an arrangement would dispose of the principal objection to the six-and-six plan; and, incidentally, it would give students completing both cycles a far better training in mathematics than the present disjointed course in that subject. Moreover, if shorter periods are thought better for the younger pupils, it would be feasible to have thirty-minute recitation periods in the 7-8-9 group and forty-five-minute periods in the 10-11-12 group (three of one equaling two of the other), and to adjust the work in other respects to the varying age and capacity of the two groups.

Another (very rudimentary) plan of reorganization consists in the introduction of different courses in grades 7-8, without separating them from the lower grades. The Education Department of the state of New York, for example, has issued a syllabus for a six-year elementary course, providing for differentiation of courses in the seventh grade, but not expressly for any redivision of grades. In this case, the reports of the department leave no doubt that this six-year syllabus is merely the first step toward a thorough reorganization of the system. As such, it is most promising. There is, however, no reason to expect any real reform so long as grades 7 and 8 are housed and administered with the lower grades. All the difficulties enumerated above, except the single uniform course, are likely to continue to exist, even to the atrocious "lock-step," or promotion by grades. The most that can be said in favor of this plan is that it would be easy to adopt,

because neither grade principals nor high-school principals would be apt to oppose it.

A third plan of reorganization calls for the separation of grades 7-8 both from the lower grades and from the high school, as at Richmond and Goshen, Ind. Separate schools for these grades, with proper equipment, personnel, and administration, would eliminate many of the abuses of the present system; but they could not provide for the great number who drop out unnecessarily at the end of the eighth grade, or who attend the high school only a year. For this reason, they are likely to prove merely a step toward the six-and-six plan, or toward the establishment of intermediate schools comprising grades 7-8-9. This plan has, however, the practical advantage that it would not be apt to antagonize high-school interests.

A fourth plan of reorganization contemplates the establishment of separate intermediate schools to include grades 7-8-9, offering parallel courses, and promoting by subjects in place of by grades. This plan is outlined in a report prepared by the Educational Committee of the Minneapolis Commercial Club, which report is attached to this paper. Something similar is already in operation in Cokato, Minn., Berkeley, Cal., Grand Rapids, Mich., and Kalamazoo, Mich. This plan is also about to go into effect in Evansville, Ind., Red Wing, Minn., and Los Angeles, Cal. It has the merit, in a greater degree than any other plan, of providing a strong three-year course for the vast number who now leave school between the seventh and tenth grades, prepared for nothing in particular and therefore for the most part doomed to swell the ranks of inefficient and ill-paid laborers.

In contrast to the present system, the following advantages may be claimed for this reorganization of the public-school system:

1. It would assign a single and distinct aim to the elementary school, and likewise to the high school.
2. It would force the elimination of non-essentials in the elementary curriculum, especially the mass of inherited puzzles.
3. It would make possible the teaching of subjects at the time when the mind is best fitted to receive them.
4. It would break up the uniform course, the lock-step in pro-

motion, and in general the attempt to standardize children beyond the sixth grade, in favor of individuality and freedom.

5. It would consequently go far to solve the problem of the laggard in school.

6. It would likewise tend to hold in school for a longer period many who now drop out, especially the boys. More would reach the end of the ninth grade, and more would consequently continue through the high school.

7. It would relieve the congestion of the curriculum and the consequent overpressure on both pupils and teachers.

8. It would render the transition from the one-teacher régime to the high school less sudden and less dangerous.

9. It would shift the breaks in the school course to the natural and least dangerous points, whether viewed from the educational, the economic, or the legal standpoint—namely, the ends of the sixth and ninth grades.

10. It would favor the wise adjustment of school facilities to resources in small communities, and in consolidated rural schools.

11. It would tend to greater efficiency in administration and in teaching.

12. It would eliminate waste both of teachers and equipment and therefore in operation, making possible better education at less (or at least no greater) expense per capita.

13. It would be better, both for pupils who drop out, and equally so for those who continue through the high school, since longer sequences of studies and more earnest work would be possible.

14. It would especially facilitate the development of handwork, in preparation for trade apprenticeship, trade schools, and continuation schools after the ninth grade.

15. Above all, while thus meeting the social and economic needs of the twentieth century, the proposed plan would maintain, in full vigor, the democracy of the American public school. This is a matter worthy of most serious consideration. We cannot forever go on sacrificing educational efficiency to a fetish of equality represented by a uniform course of study. Somehow we must, and we shall, adapt our educational system to the new needs of a new age. Already in several cities along the Atlantic seaboard

the plan is being tried of sorting out at the beginning of the seventh grade those who are going on to high school, and sending them directly into the high school; or else of sorting out those who are not going to high school, and sending them directly into trade or industrial schools. Either plan is undemocratic in itself, and likewise open to serious objection, in that it compels an irrevocable decision as to the future career of the child at a time when neither the parent nor the pupil can make such a decision wisely. On the other hand, the intermediate (or junior high-) school plan, while recognizing frankly that all children are not alike in tastes or ability, nor destined to follow the same occupations in life, would tend to keep all children together through the ninth grade—that is to say, for a year or two longer than at present—and would thus the better enable them to “find themselves” and choose wisely some occupation for which their tastes and talents fit them, or haply to defer the choice still longer, meantime securing a high-school education.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the plan conforms to the ideas expressed by the Committee of the American Federation of Labor on Industrial Education, of which committee John Mitchell was chairman; and further, that the intermediate-school plan was expressly and unanimously indorsed by the Minnesota Federation of Labor, at the Red Wing meeting in 1909.

It has been suggested by some that the plan may be adapted to large cities, but is not adapted to smaller communities. This I believe to be an error. In a great city, with a vast sum of money invested in buildings constructed for specific purposes, the difficulty of carrying out such a reorganization is indeed not far from insuperable; and yet such a change would call for careful planning, some extra administrative work while the new system was being established, and for a building program not necessarily larger than would otherwise be undertaken, but adjusted to different ideals. Moreover, in a great city the forces of educational conservatism are apt to be strongly entrenched; and these are sometimes reinforced by such as fear that a change might affect their own importance in the system.

In smaller communities, on the other hand, none of these conditions exist, or if they exist their influence is less pronounced. The

buildings are fewer, the distances to be traveled by the pupils are less, and the teaching force is, as a rule, less conservative. Where only one building is used for school purposes in the town, the change presents no difficulty whatsoever. It is merely a question of administration. Where two or three buildings only are used, the distances are not apt to be so great that pupils from the seventh grade upward cannot be sent to the central building. Even where there are eight or ten buildings in a city it will usually be possible to take one of them for use as an intermediate school in each end of the city. By one method or the other, the problem can be solved; and I am fully convinced that to the villages and smaller cities we must look, in this vital reorganization of education, for educational leadership.

By way of confirmation of the advantages claimed for a redivision of the grades and the high school, it is possible to cite the experience of various communities which have tried one or the other plan. The following statements are taken from letters in my possession. Taken together, they seem to indicate that (as argued above) almost any division is better than the traditional eight-and-four division.

#### I. THE TEN-AND-TWO PLAN

GARY, IND. 7/17/11.

We group the children from the kindergarten through the second year High School in the same building. Our plan is to provide every inducement for keeping the children in school until they are 16 years of age. We increase the per capita cost in the 7th. and 8th. grades, but lower it in the 9th. and 10th. grades, the average being practically constant. The efficiency of school work is raised because of the superior character of the work in the common schools.

WILLIAM WIRT, *Supl.*

#### II. SIX-AND-SIX PLAN

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.

December 20, 1911.

The six and six plan of dividing the twelve grades is in successful operation in the Crawfordsville schools. The upper six grades, seven to twelve inclusive, are located in one plant on an entire city block. The 7th. and 8th. grades are in one building and the 9th. to 12th. grades are in another building erected so that they are connected with each other. The supervising principal has direction of the entire six grades. Practically all of our pupils under the

seventh grade change buildings for the last time before they are old enough to quit school. The grammar grades are organized on the departmental system just as the High School. When a pupil once gets beyond the seventh grade there is no reason why he should drop out so far as the organization of the school is concerned. With our 8th. grade students there is nothing new or strange about the High School. They have been living in it for two years and know the teachers and their ways. The grammar grade students attend lectures, entertainments, and social functions with the High School pupils. All the 7th. grade students that make good records in the 7th. grade English are permitted to elect German or Latin in the 8th. grade. They are thus enabled to get an early start in their foreign language work. The grammar grade boys who take manual training take it in the High School shop and the grammar grade girls who take sewing take it in the High School building. The results are highly satisfactory. The percentage of students dropping out at the end of the 8th. grade is no larger than those dropping out at the end of the 7th., 9th., or any other grade.

L. N. HENES, *Supt.*

LEAD, S.DAK.

May 4, 1910.

We are completing our fifth year under the 6-6 plan and believe results more than justify such an organization. For a city of our size it would seem to be the better plan. For large cities it would seem to me that the 6-3-3 plan might be preferable to the 6-6 plan.

ANSON H. BIGELOW, *Supt.*

### III. EIGHT-ONE-AND-THREE PLAN

DENVER, COLO. 10/25/11.

In two of our high schools the first year of the high school is separated from the main buildings. In both cases this has been due to the congested conditions. We find that, contrary to our expectations, the great majority of the parents seem to favor this separation. It seems to me to give a certain distinct unity to the school and a feeling of solidarity on the part of the pupils, which has apparently been beneficial. It also constitutes a somewhat less formidable break in the elementary school work, and the pupils themselves are not overwhelmed by the presence of older pupils in the room who are strangers to them. We are inclined to think there are many arguments for the permanent separation of the lower grade from the higher in high school work.

C. E. CHADSEY, *Supt.*

### IV. SEVEN-AND-FIVE PLAN

MUSKEGON, MICH.

June 15, 1911.

The seventh grade work is done in a central building on the departmental plan. The 8th. and 9th. grades are in the Annex of the High School and are held under closer supervision than the regular High School grades. The 10th.,

11th., and 12th., grades are considered the High School proper. We now believe that this is a better division than the old eight and four plan. It gives us the opportunity of doing a different class of work in the 7th. grade and also enables us to vary the work in the 8th. and 9th. grades so as to keep up the interest of the children. The results of the seven and five plan are:

(a) the number leaving school is growing less and less.

(b) efficiency of school work is becoming greater.

(c) parents are now pleased with the plan although they were skeptical at first.

(d) there has been only a nominal increase of expenditure.

The most striking effect is that the attendance in our High Schools during the last ten years has doubled although the city has decreased in population in that time. We also have more boys than girls in the High School. We have departmental work in the 7th. grade and thus prepare the children for the transition to the work in the High School. I believe in the plan and would be glad to have it arranged so that we could have the 7th., 8th., and 9th., grades in a building by themselves and the 10th., 11th., and 12th. in a building by themselves.

J. M. FROST, *Superintendent*

### V. SEVEN-THREE-AND-TWO PLAN

KALAMAZOO, MICH.

June 29, 1911.

The Central High School includes all members of grades 11 and 12 and also pupils of the 9th. and 10th. grades from adjoining territory. We have now in three other buildings which are situated in other parts of the town, the 9th. and 10th. grade pupils working in a departmental school with 8th. grade pupils and also in one case with 7th. grade pupils. In its working out the plan has convinced me, First, that the distribution of high school centers increases enrollment; second, that the treatment of the 8th. grade on the same basis as the High School, with promotion by subjects, is very effective in helping to hold pupils in school over the restless period; third, that the 8th. grade is perfectly able to carry on the work on the same plan and by the same instructors as the High School. As to the efficiency of the school work, I know that the efficiency of the 8th. grade work has been increased and that the efficiency of the 9th. grade work has not been injured.

S. O. HARTWELL, *Supt.*

### VI. SIX-TWO-AND-FOUR PLAN

ELY, MINN., 10/17/11

Our buildings are not such here as to allow us to try the 6-3-3 plan. We are organized, however, after a somewhat similar plan with most excellent results. Our grammar school is run on the departmental or sub-high school plan. The grammar school is in the same building as the high school and uses

he same shops, kitchen, sewing room, etc., and dovetails into the High School work.

If we had room on the grammar school floor, I would hold back the freshman high school class and call the organization an elementary high school.

It seems to me that the so-called 6-3-3 plan comes nearer to being ideal than any other that is suggested. It would certainly help to break up the monotony of our existing grammar grades, and to hold the children in school.

C. H. BARNES, *Supt.*

CLOQUET, MINN. 10/24/11

We have rearranged our courses in the seventh and eighth grades. About half of the students take the industrial course. I believe that we have a greater number of students entering the high school because of this re-arrangement. We are well equipped for all the industrial work. In agriculture we have a ten-acre farm and a greenhouse.

PETER OLESEN, *Supt.*

RICHMOND, IND.

June 22, 1911.

The seventh and eighth grades are together in a building containing gymnasium and laboratory and conducted on the Junior High School plan. This plan has done much to keep the grammar school pupils in school, securing a much larger attendance in the High Schools.

T. A. MOTT, *Supt.*

GOSHEN, IND.

Our seventh and eighth grades have been on the departmental plan for five years, occupying the building formerly used as a High School building. It has a large study room and separate recitation room and is conducted precisely on the High School plan being under the charge of a Principal and a number of assistant teachers. Each teacher gives instruction in two subjects and has charge of the assembly room one study period a day. By this arrangement of the grammar grade work, we can easily allow pupils who are capable of completing the grammar grade work in a short time, to take up one or more High School subjects, and thus shorten the number of years they are in the High School proper, while the average pupil is not hurried beyond his capabilities. We find the transition to the High School made much easier because of the departmental work in the grades. The difficulty of becoming accustomed to a large study room and the supervision of a number of teachers is eliminated. When pupils are promoted to the High School they have only new subjects to become familiar with, not new mechanical arrangements.

LILLIAN E. MICHAEL, *Supt.*

# VII. SIX-THREE-AND-THREE PLAN

COKATO, MINN.

Nov. 15, 1911.

Our course has been modified to the six year elementary plan, with the idea of teaching all subject matter to completeness whenever it is taught and doing away with "rehashings" as the pupil progresses. Under the old scheme, if the schools are to get out of the rut they are in, the 7th. and 8th. grades must be reorganized, whether or not the 6-3-3 plan is adopted. The 6-3-3 plan would not diminish the number carried over from the 6th. and 7th. grades. We carry over all of them now. Moreover, the 6-3-3 plan will hold the 8th. grader over to the end of the 9th. year when he is almost wholly past the silly age and entered the age of responsibility. We find that we have lost only two 8th. graders in two years—formerly we lost from 20 to 35. Moreover, those we lose at the end of the freshman year go to some business or trade school. The two who left us went into an intensive business or industrial school last year. Moreover, the 9th. graders are carried over in large measure into the sophomore class. It was so with us. Our present sophomore class came over from the freshman class almost as a unit. Further, it is not a valid objection to the 6-3-3 plan that it calls for differentiation too early. Children differentiate at that age whether we guide them or not; what we should do is to guide them.

As to whether the new plan would hold in school those who otherwise would leave, it is sufficient to say that we have changed the 7th., 8th., 9th., and High School attendance from 82 to 175 in two years because we promote by subjects, introduce vital material and provide High School instructors to treat pupils as individuals rather than as units of a grade.

JOHN MONROE, *Supt.*

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Nov. 14, 1911.

The old High School Building is now occupied by the 7th. and 8th. graders and probably next February we shall have the 9th. grade there also. Then we shall have a Junior High School. We are now agitating for a new South End High School. When we get that we shall put in that building the 7th., 8th., and 9th. grades and then we shall have another Junior High School. In the west end there is now in existence one school in which are grades 9 to 12 inclusive. In this school, the change in plan of administration is made between the 6th. and 7th. grades. I am trying to establish one vital point, namely that the change shall come between the 6th. and 7th. grades and not between the 8th. and 9th.

W. A. GREESON, *Supt.*

BERKELEY, CAL. 10/28/11.

(1) It is true that such a plan as we have in operation in Berkeley would involve a reorganization of the school system, but it is easily possible to over-

estimate the seriousness of this. In the first place, the only physical change involved would be that of congregating at central schools the 7th. and 8th. grades and holding them until the end of the 9th. grade. This can be done without erecting new buildings or making any material change in the old, through transferring from the central schools a sufficient number of children to make room for the 7th. 8th. and 9th. grades. Frequently, in older cities, buildings near the business section of the city, once situated conveniently to masses of children are now partly unoccupied due to the spread of the business section and the withdrawal of the population to outlying districts. In such a situation, this change can be brought about with economy to the department. As a city grows and new buildings are required, then and then only do there need to be erected special buildings for the work of this intermediate cycle. As to the time taken to effect the transition, three terms, that is one year and a half, saw the plan in complete operation.

(2) The cost of maintenance would be increased only where an increase of the number of buildings is required, but then in this particular the natural growth of a city means an increase in cost of maintenance and hence is not a proper charge against the change in system. In one particular, however, the claim of an increased cost of maintenance is correct, and that is in teachers' salaries. With us in Berkeley the Board of Education has adjusted salaries for the lower high schools in this way: teachers therein teaching on high school certificates receive high school salaries; and teachers on grammar school certificates, grammar school salaries. We are not limiting the number teaching on high school certificates merely to the 9th. grade but are scattering them about in the 7th. and 8th. grades as well. In consequence, the tendency is to have a larger number of teachers on high school certificate and hence on high school salary than under the traditional plan of procedure where every teacher in the elementary schools is working under the elementary salary schedule.

The policy respecting this matter of salaries, however, is one to be determined by the local board of education which, of course, can exercise its own judgment as to how expensive or how economical it desires its second cycle of work to be in this respect. In Los Angeles, which is just organizing its schools on this basis, the matter is being handled differently. They have adopted a special schedule for all working in the lower high schools, the average salary being somewhat higher than in the elementary schools but lower than the average of salaries paid in the upper high schools. So far as I can see, this is the only item wherein the maintenance expense of the plan tends to be greater than that under the traditional system.

(3) I have just completed a careful study of the effect of terminating a second cycle of work with the ninth year on school attendance. One of the theoretical criticisms which we had to face was that it would provide a natural stopping place for boys and girls of the ninth grade which would diminish instead of increase high school attendance. I have all along held the contrary belief. The figures will interest you. Out of a total of 453 pupils who were

enrolled last year, 1910-11, in the ninth grade, 118 are missing in the tenth. Of these, 20 are repeating their work in whole or in part and hence are still in the system; 22 have moved to other cities, and are known to have entered the schools therein; 17 are working; 3 are out on account of illness; 17 went to business schools, convents and private schools; and 39 have disappeared without leaving any clue as to their reasons or intentions. Two of these groups those repeating work and those who have entered other public schools, aggregating 42 pupils cannot be considered as a proper charge against the local system. For the remaining 76, representing an actual loss of 16.7 per cent of the total, the system must assume responsibility. Compare this with Ayres' study showing over 50 per cent loss in the 9th. grade under the old system.

(4) As I would have courses shaped in the several cycles, it would not be necessary for children at the beginning of the 7th. grade to determine which of two entirely different courses he would choose. In fact, I would be very strongly opposed to requiring a child at this time to choose between two rigidly defined courses; but this is entirely unnecessary.

FRANK F. BUNKER, *Supt.*

EVANSVILLE, IND.

10/25/11

Our Junior High School, Auditorium, gymnasium buildings are still in process of construction, and the probabilities are that we shall not be able to start our plan before September 1912.

The school will consist of the 7th. 8th. and 9th. grades in an organization apart from the elementary grades conducted on secondary education principles. This school is on the same block with the Senior high school. As the work grows and the city increases in population, we propose to erect other junior high schools in various parts of the city. The community is becoming very much interested in the plan and the school board is a unit in its support.

ERNEST P. WILES, *Principal*

#### A PLAN FOR THE REARRANGEMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

PROPOSED BY THE EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE MINNEAPOLIS COMMERCIAL CLUB

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., April 5, 1910

To the Honorable Board of Education,

City of Minneapolis:

GENTLEMEN: The Public Affairs Committee of the Minneapolis Commercial Club by unanimous vote this day approved the following report from the Educational Committee of the Club, and respectfully request that you adopt the suggestions therein contained.

Yours respectfully,

A. E. ZONNE, *Chairman*

MINNEAPOLIS, April 2, 1910

To the Public Affairs Committee,  
Minneapolis, Minnesota:

The Educational Committee respectfully submits the following report touching certain proposed changes in the public school system which we believe to be in the direction of increased efficiency. In case the report meets your approval we would suggest that the Educational Committee be authorized to present the plan to the Board of Education and urge its adoption.

#### I. THE PLAN

A. We recommend that intermediate schools be established comprising the seventh, eighth and ninth grades: This involves:

(a) The housing of these grades together in buildings exclusively devoted to that purpose:

(b) The establishment of such administrative relations between each high school and the intermediate schools in its district as to avoid any hiatus between them, any duplication of work, or any lowering of the standard in such high school subjects as may continue to be offered in the ninth grade.

We would suggest that this end may be most surely attained by making each high school principal the supervisor of the intermediate schools in his district.

B. We further recommend that differentiation begin at the seventh grade, at least to the extent of offering two parallel courses, one containing much hand work and intensive training in practical branches, the other emphasizing preparation for high school.

C. Finally, we recommend that promotion in the intermediate schools be by subjects in place of by grades.

#### II. THE REASONS

In our opinion, the foregoing provisions are all equally essential to the success of the plan. The reasons for this conclusion are, in brief, as follows:

1. A thousand pupils drop out of school every year in Minneapolis during or at the end of the eighth grade, and another thousand during or at the end of the ninth grade, that is before being in high school long enough to accomplish anything worth while. If this combined army of two thousand children who now leave school every year in Minneapolis, prepared for nothing in particular, could be given a unified course, under one roof, beginning at the seventh grade, the effect would be:

(a) To hold in school through the ninth grade many of those who now leave during or at the end of the eighth grade: and

(b) to give them all a far more valuable preparation for practical life than is now possible.

2. At about twelve years of age, which usually marks the beginning of adolescence, children begin to differ markedly in their tastes and capacity; and

to attempt longer to teach them all, everything offered in these grades, or which may profitably be offered there, is in our opinion a grievous waste of the pupils' time, the teachers' energy, and the people's money.

3. In the face of these growing differences between pupils, to compel them to repeat subjects which they have mastered, merely because they have failed in other subjects in the same grade, is to cultivate apathy and distaste for school.

4. A large percentage of those who leave school during the eighth and ninth years are boys, and it is well known that many of these now lack interest and energy in school work. We believe that such changes as are recommended would tend to hold their interest and increase their energy during these years. Moreover, if interest in school work is once aroused, many who would otherwise drop out at the first opportunity are likely to continue through the entire high school course.

5. By concentrating the work of these three grades in relatively few centers, yet so placed as to be within walking distance for children twelve to fifteen years of age, it would be possible to provide assembly halls, gymnasiums, and ample facilities for hand work of all kinds. Such rooms and facilities are imperatively needed for children in these grades, yet cannot be provided on an adequate scale for all school buildings, except at prohibitive cost.

6. By such concentration it would also be possible to equalize classes, avoiding both very large and very small sections. In this way, the efficiency of the work could be notably increased.

7. By concentration of these grades it would likewise be possible to have teachers devote themselves to whatever line of work they can do best, thus reducing the pressure on teachers and improving the quality of their work.

8. By separating the larger from the smaller children, the problem of discipline would be materially simplified, since the methods suited to one age are not suited to another. In this way the principals would be freed from many needless annoyances, and enabled more effectively to supervise the work of teaching.

9. It is impossible, and it would be undesirable if possible, to train boys of twelve to fifteen or sixteen years of age for definite trades; but it is possible and highly desirable to give them such general training of the hand and eye as shall enable them readily to adapt themselves to the requirements of whatever occupation they finally enter. This we regard as one of the most important ends to be obtained by the provision of a unified course under one roof for grades seven, eight and nine.

10. Finally, the plan proposed would in our opinion make for economy as well as efficiency.

In the first place, assuming the number of children to remain the same, it would involve merely the rearrangement of certain district boundaries and the provision of assembly halls, gymnasiums and work shops. But some schools already have certain of these facilities, and we understand that others are clamoring for them. Even supposing that the expense of equipping the

intermediate schools would be greater than the expense for such other schools as would obtain these facilities anyway, it would still be true that the saving achieved by equalizing classes and by using the equipment for hand work up to its full capacity, would in the end more than offset such additional expenses of equipment.

In the second place, if the intermediate schools should render school work not only more effective, but also so much more attractive as to hold in school many who now drop out, and thus increase the number of children to be educated, we have full confidence that the people of Minneapolis would rejoice in the fact and consider money so spent well spent.

Respectfully submitted,

E. V. ROBINSON  
W. A. FEISBIE  
EDWIN S. SLATER  
SVEN OTTEDAL  
J. E. MEYERS  
F. FAYRAM  
WM. A. SCHAPER  
ALFRED H. BRIGHT  
D. EDMUND SMITH  
CHAS. W. DREW  
CHAS. L. SAWYER  
F. G. McMILLAN  
J. B. SUTHERLAND





**END OF  
TITLE**